

A STUDY OF SELECTED PRINCIPLES OF A DEVELOPMENTAL
READING PROGRAM FOR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by

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INTRODUCTION

Across the United States today the constant charge is made that many children are not being taught to read. Anyone interested in and closely connected with education is quick to recognize the fallacy of this charge. They are, however, just as quick in realizing the need for a better reading program, one designed to teach all students the basic principles of reading and to develop each student's reading ability to his maximum potential.

Thousands of children are "graduating" from our public schools every year receiving minimum marks in their academic courses because of their inability to use and apply such basics to reading as phonics and getting the meaning from the context. Countless thousands more are graduating with acceptable grades but whose achievement is below and in some cases far below their potential.

Developmental reading programs are being established not only to minimize the number of low achievers but also to enrich the curriculum for normal and high achieving students. As Huus stated at the International Reading Association of 1956:

Those children making normal progress for their age and grade or who are accelerated still need help on skills that will make reading easier. Some need practice on reading by thought units. Most of them need instruction and practice in using the dictionary and glossary. All of them need guidance in adapting their reading techniques to the various types of content and methods of organization for various purposes. Compare the abilities needed in reading stories, factual material, newspaper articles and advertisements, catalogs, dictionaries, telephone directories, timetables, graphs, maps, charts, dress patterns, blueprints, and so on. Compare the abilities in reading for recreation, for study, for analysis and criticism.

Another of the basic skills which must be extended is getting the full meaning from the material read. . . .

The first aspect, then of the reading program is the continued development of the basic reading skills.¹

A developmental program is carried out by the regular teachers employed in the school system. Such a program should begin in kindergarten and be carried through college. In this report the material will be directed toward a program for the intermediate grades. The reason the writer chose these particular grades is because of his conviction that all primary teachers are actively involved in teaching reading and most are teaching close to the potential maximum of their present training. This is not to be construed as meaning there is no room for improvement in the primary field; certainly there is room for improvement and here it is that the foundation is laid for the whole reading program, but with the advent of higher teacher qualifications and better teaching techniques under a more balanced program, it is believed the primary program has been improving and will continue to improve. Beginning with grade four on, however, a passive attitude to the teaching of reading is often displayed. As Sprietsma states:

. . . while we are all inclined to deny it, we still operate on the century old assumption that children learn to read in the primary grades and read to learn thereafter. . . . too few teachers from the fourth grade on realize that they have a part in the tremendous responsibility for furthering growth in reading.

What is needed is a reading program which, while sequentially developed through all the grades, will provide for individual differences in rate of development, and which will also provide for the proper remediation at any level where it is needed.²

¹Helen Huus, "The Nature and Scope of Reading Programs Adapted to Today's Needs in the Intermediate Grades," Better Readers for Our Times, William S. Gray and Nancy Larrick, editors. (International Reading Association Conference Proceedings, Volume 1. New York: Scholastic Magazines, 1956), p. 25.

²Lewis R. Sprietsma, "Reading Skills Should Be Taught At All Levels," Journal of Secondary Education, 37:4 (April, 1962), p. 253.

Today's educators are universal in accepting the fact that children are individuals having tremendous differences physically and mentally. Due to these differences each child needs to be treated as a separate individual rather than being treated as one part of a homogenous group. For many teachers this appears to be an impossible task, for with a class of thirty students, giving each child individual attention for any appreciable length of time would indeed be impossible. Therefore a program is desired which would give a maximum of the benefits of individual attention to the students but which would require only a minimum per cent of increased individual attention on the part of the teacher.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study was undertaken to present the principles of a developmental reading program and suggest methods by which these principles could be formulated into an effective developmental reading program which could be instituted in any elementary school. Special emphasis was placed on skills or techniques on the intermediate grade level.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Reading. Harris defines reading as, "the meaningful interpretation of verbal symbols."¹ In order for meaningful interpretation to take place, the reader must recognize words, organize these words into thought units and relate the thought units to his own experience and knowledge.

¹Albert J. Harris, How To Increase Reading Ability (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1961), p. 8.

Developmental reading. According to Harris, "Developmental reading activities are those in which the main purpose of the teacher is to bring about an improvement in reading skills--activities in which learning to read is the main goal."¹ In this report developmental reading includes instruction in how to read for information and enjoyment. This is in agreement with Smith and Dechant's statement that developmental reading, "includes what Harris . . . calls developmental reading, functional reading, and recreational reading."²

Skimming. A very rapid reading which the reader uses for a specific purpose such as getting an overall view of the article or in looking for a specific item such as a name or date. Skimming often involves reading only the first sentence of each paragraph or may even be restricted to the reading of headings and sub-heads in the article. This is in agreement with Harris, though he identified two types of skimming: (1) "skimming to find answers to specific questions." and (2) "skimming to get a total impression."³ He then defined each type.

Phonics. A study skill used in sounding out words through the use of the sounds made by the alphabetical letters or combinations of letters. In this method the parts of the word are sounded first and then the parts are put together in order to pronounce the whole word. This is in agreement with Betts

¹Ibid., p. 12.

²Henry P. Smith and Emerald V. Dechant, Psychology in Teaching Reading (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), p. 379.

³Albert J. Harris, How To Increase Reading Ability (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 434 - 436.

excepting for the fact that Betts calls it, "a technique for pronouncing words by sound units."¹

Intermediate grades. Grades four, five, and six in an elementary school.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

The documentary method of research was used in the preparation of this report as the writer's objective was to assimilate accepted facts and to utilize the better points of existing or proposed programs in organizing an effective plan which may be instituted in any elementary school. The references for this task were obtained at the Kansas State University Library.

ESTABLISHING THE NEED FOR A DEVELOPMENTAL READING PROGRAM

Most teachers who are involved in the teaching of reading are sincerely trying to teach reading as well as they can under their present reading programs, teacher training, time allotments, and interpretations of the reading goals for their level of teaching. This includes the teachers of the intermediate grades whom this writer already stated were not actively engaged in the teaching of reading and is not meant to contradict the earlier statement. The seeming discrepancy between these statements stems from the fact that many intermediate teachers have interpreted the role which they are to fill in the reading program as that of letting the children read to learn rather than that of continuing the process of teaching the students to read. The desire to accept their complete responsibility in fully educating the students is equally as great in this level of teachers as it is in the teachers of the

¹Emmett Albert Betts, Foundations of Reading Instruction (New York: American Book Company, 1950), p. 614.

primary grades and it is through this desire that the supervisor or administrator is likely to achieve the greatest degree of success in implementing a new reading program.

Probably the best time to stimulate the teachers into initiating a new or revised program is just after a reading test has been administered to all the pupils of the school. After the results have been obtained the administrator might hold a faculty meeting for the purpose of discussing the test scores, the present reading program, and what may be done to improve the students' reading abilities. In this situation it is likely the administrator will need only lend a guiding hand and the teachers themselves will take the fore in determining that a revision of the program is needed. By permitting the teachers to formulate the program, they are likely to carry it out with a much greater degree of enthusiasm and understanding than if it were forced on them.

The administrator may or may not wish to use lay personnel from the community during the formulation of the program. Witty and Katz say, "Many schools have found that it's best to include the community in their planning from the beginning, instead of waiting for criticism or questioning."¹ In any event it is advisable to stress to the public that a developmental reading program is not a completely new program consisting of radically new ideas. Instead it is a revision of the existing program with the main differences being: (1) continued stress in the active teaching of reading skills and techniques throughout the entire school system, and (2) allowing for individual differences through the process of grouping and other techniques for the

¹Paul Witty and Margaret Katz, A Developmental Reading Program for Grades 6 through 9 (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1956), p. 49.

purpose of allowing each individual child to work at his current level of reading and to progress at his own advancement rate.

PRINCIPLES OF A DEVELOPMENTAL READING PROGRAM

A developmental reading program should be based on certain principles. According to Smith and Dechant educators are in general agreement that the following basic principles are necessary to make the developmental reading program workable and effective:

1. The developmental program must be an all-school program directed toward carefully identified goals. It must receive the support and co-operation of the entire school staff.
2. The developmental program must be concerned with the social and personal development of each student as well as his growth in the skills, understandings, and attitudes necessary for successful reading.
3. The developmental program co-ordinates reading with the pupil's other communicative experiences.
4. The developmental program must be a continuous program extending through the elementary and secondary grades and college. It must provide instruction and guidance in basic reading skills, in content-area reading, in study skills, and in recreational reading.
5. The developmental program must be a flexible program that is adjusted at each level of advancement to the wide variations in student characteristics, abilities and reading needs.
6. The developmental program must have a stimulating classroom setting in which attitudes, interests, and abilities are developed effectively.
7. The developmental program must provide plentiful reading materials that cover a wide range of difficulty and interest.
8. The developmental program must include continuous measurement and evaluation of the effectiveness of the program as a whole and of its more specific aspects.
9. The developmental program must provide for continuous identification and immediate remediation of deficiencies and difficulties encountered by any student.
10. The developmental program must include differentiated instruction to meet the needs of each child, but it cannot ignore the

commonality of needs, interests, and abilities among children.

11. The developmental program must look upon reading as a process rather than as a subject. Reading is taught on all levels in all subject areas by all teachers.

12. The developmental program must emphasize reading for understanding and aim to develop flexibility in comprehension and rate in accordance with the student's abilities and purposes and the difficulty levels of the materials.

13. The developmental program must allow each student to progress at his own success rate to his own maximum capacity.

14. The developmental program must seek to develop reading maturity. A mature reader reads all kinds of materials. He perceives words quickly and accurately and reacts with correct meaning. He reads both for information and recreation.⁴

The writer of this report used these basic principles to formulate headings for the major points of the suggested developmental reading program. This plan was followed to reduce the possibility of omitting or violating any of the basic principles.

Goals of a Developmental Reading Program

Once the need for a developmental reading program has been established the goals for such a program should be determined. Since the program is being established to improve the reading ability of the students the goals should be stated in terms of student behavioral outcomes. Based on the points of general agreement in the writings which were reviewed, this writer offers the following six broad behavioral outcomes as the characteristics which the teachers should try to develop in their reading students:

(1) He should be able to independently apply the basic word attack skills. This includes word-sight recognition, phonetical analysis, structural analysis, and using the context.

(2) He should be able to read with comprehension and should use relationships to develop this comprehension.

⁴Henry P. Smith and Emerald V. Dechant, *Psychology In Teaching Reading* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1961), pp. 379-380.

- (3) He should be a fluent, expressive oral reader.
- (4) He should be able to use reading techniques. This includes skimming, rate adjustment, and outlining.
- (5) He should be able to read critically and evaluatively.
- (6) He should enjoy reading for recreation and knowledge and have a sound foundation for life-long personal reading activities.

The characteristics of a mature reader indicate the objectives toward which the whole developmental program is oriented but these characteristics are not likely to be developed in the reading students unless each teacher is familiar with the logical sequence in the developmental pattern of the reading skills and abilities and also knows which ones are normally taught at her level of teaching. A prime fundamental of the developmental reading program is that allowances must be made from any guides of specific instruction for variations in the students' individual needs. However, a guide for specific reading instruction appropriate for the various teaching levels is necessary to prevent chaos and confusion in the developmental program. A solution offered by Witty and Ratz¹ is to adopt a reading textbook series, then adapt or enrich the instruction according to the nature and needs of each group, with special emphasis on a program of skill-building. According to Heilman reading instruction at the intermediate grade level should consist of the proper combination of:

1. Review or re-teaching of essential skills taught at the primary level for those pupils who may not have mastered them there.
2. Introduction and systematic teaching of new reading skills characteristically emphasized in the intermediate levels.²

¹Paul Witty and Margaret Ratz, A Developmental Reading Program for Grades 6 through 9 (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1956), p. 34.

²Arthur W. Heilman, Principles and Practices of Teaching Reading (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1961), p. 252.

Heilman then goes on to list the reading skills and abilities which are characteristically emphasized at the primary and intermediate levels.

Skills and abilities emphasized at the primary level

1. Stress readiness activities
2. Associate meaning with printed word symbols
3. Develop sight vocabulary
4. Build visual word discrimination skills
 - a) Word configuration
 - b) Context clues
 - c) Structural analysis
 - (1) Inflectional endings
 - (2) Compound words
 - (3) Prefixes and suffixes
5. Build auditory discrimination of speech sounds in words
 - a) Skills in listening
 - b) Initial consonant sounds
 - c) Substitution of initial and end sounds of words
 - d) Blends and digraphs
 - e) Vowel sounds
6. Teach expansion of meanings
 - a) Use picture clues
 - b) Work with roots or base words
 - c) Work with synonyms and antonyms
7. Develop independent work habits
8. Teach simple alphabetizing

Skills and abilities emphasized at the intermediate level

1. Review, re-teach, or teach all primary skills which the child has not mastered
2. Continuously expand sight vocabulary
3. Expand word attack skills (phonics and syllabication)
4. Develop study skills in finding materials
 - a) Dictionary skills
 - b) Use of reference materials, development of independent work habits
 - c) Facility in using index, table of contents, appendix, glossary, maps, and charts

5. Expand concepts in content areas
 - a) Development of ability for critical reading
 - b) Development of skill in evaluating what is read, perceiving relationships, and drawing inferences
6. Increase rate of comprehension
 - a) Development of different rates of reading for different materials and different purposes
 - b) Development of ability to scan material for specific information
7. Cultivate social understandings through reading
 - a) Understanding one's immediate environment and its relation to the past
 - b) Understanding other people, countries, and cultures
8. Encourage recreational reading for
 - a) Pleasure
 - b) Growth toward maturity
 - c) Personal adjustment¹

Personal and Social Development

The personal and social development of the student may be furthered by grouping within the classroom. This allows the youngster to read at his own level, progress at his own rate, and yet be in a class composed of youngsters of his age and having the same personal and social interests. Grouping on this basis is in agreement with Smith and Dechant who say grouping should be directed toward the following objectives:

- 1) It should foster desirable social relationships and attitudes.
- 2) It should help us to provide for the individual reading needs of each child.
- 3) It should promote facility and independence in reading and study.
- 4) It should help us to provide each child with satisfying reading material.
- 5) It should reduce the need for remedial instruction.²

¹Arthur W. Heilman, Principles and Practices of Teaching Reading (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1961), pp. 252 - 254.

²Henry P. Smith and Emerald V. Dechant, Psychology In Teaching Reading (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), p. 304.

Reading materials can also be fitted to the personal and social needs of the youngsters through careful guidance on the part of the instructor. If a youngster is moving to a new community the teacher may suggest a book telling about another family who moved and how they acquired friends in their new location. Any problem such as this which may be causing anxiety for the child should be analyzed by the teacher and books which may tend to ease the wondering or fear should be suggested to the child as being books which the teacher feels will be interesting to him.

Coordination of Reading With Other Communicative Experiences

Reading is not a subject dealing merely with word recognition and pronunciation, rather it is a combination of word recognition, pronunciation, and idea association or comprehension. As has been stated elsewhere in this report, reading without comprehension would not be reading for there would be no meaning, no pattern of events, nothing but word names associated only with the letters used to spell the words. Therefore it is seen that reading is indeed dependent on the communicative experiences of the student. For instance if a child does not know what a wheelbarrow is and is reading a story in which a man is running a wheelbarrow as his part in the construction of a building, the youngster has nothing in his experience to associate the word wheelbarrow with and would be completely vague as to the task which the writer has described-- he is not communicating. This viewpoint is in agreement with Harris when he says:

In recent years we have become aware of the close interrelationships among the various forms of oral and written communication, and in consequence much attention has been given to an integrated approach to the language arts. People express themselves in speech and writing; they interpret the expressions of others by listening and reading. Basic to

all four is a grasp of the structure of the language and the personal development of ideas, concepts, and attitudes. Successful teaching of reading must necessarily be related to the other phases of the language arts.¹

The classroom teacher should play a major role in providing a rich background of varied experiences and a growing vocabulary which the children may use as a basis for understanding the structure of the language and in developing ideas, concepts, and attitudes. Much of this background is supplied through the field of social studies. The primary teachers begin this with a study of the home and progress through the school and community. In the intermediate grades this field becomes very broad and includes a study of the people of the world, how they live, how they earn their living, the animals and minerals found in their region, crops grown for market and many other facts of economic and social importance.

Another method of providing background experience for the pupils is provided through the "show and tell" or sharing period. Again this is begun in the primary grades and children are encouraged to bring interesting things to school and tell their classmates about them. The teacher may limit the objects for a particular day to rocks, pets, or any objective item which she feels will be beneficial to them. This program extends into the intermediate grades but here it is more often concerned with vacation trips or points of interest which a youngster has visited and may be supplemented by actual class visitations to mines, factories, or other local points of interest.

A particular story or topic of interest may provide the need for background material which has not yet been established by the students. The teacher may utilize the capabilities of the more gifted students in the class by having them find the information needed and give a report concerning this to the rest

¹Albert J. Harris, How to Increase Reading Ability (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1961), p. 5.

of the class. Thus the teacher is providing for individual differences as well as broadening their experience backgrounds.

A Continuous Program Extending Through College and Covering All Reading Aspects

Reading is not a subject which should be taught only in the primary grades and used from that period on, but rather one which should be taught when any new skills or techniques need to be learned or when any of the older ones need reviewing. As Smith and Dechant say:

We now recognize what we formerly ignored: every student at every level in his development encounters new reading problems and his development of reading skills is a continuing process.

This newer interpretation of reading presents each teacher with an additional professional responsibility. Teachers at all levels and in all subjects share responsibility for teaching reading. Each must accept his portion of continually improving each child's ability to read.

This means, of course, that whatever subject and at whatever level we teach, we will need to acquaint ourselves with all that is known about the nature of the reading process and the nature of the reader. . . . We must understand the goals and methods of reading instruction from the preliminary readiness acquired in the home and kindergarten to the finely developed reading skills that should be taught and applied at the high school and college level. Each teacher must see his part in the cooperative project of developmental reading throughout the educational life-span of the pupil.¹

It is very important that each teacher knows the objectives of the reading program for the grades which precede and follow her grade level as well as those which are taught at her particular grade level. Only through the use of this knowledge can she determine which fundamentals and skills need reviewing and which ones should be introduced.

Huns stated the following concerning study skills for the intermediate grades:

¹Henry P. Smith and Emerald V. Dechant, Psychology In Teaching Reading (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), pp. 4 - 5.

Of primary importance is the skill of locating main ideas and supporting details. Another useful skill is skimming, particularly when using reference materials where but a portion of the total is relevant and speedy location is expedient. Skimming is needed for locating dates, names, important events, definitions, general ideas, or related sections.

Locating information--whether in a card catalog, an encyclopedia, a dictionary, a textbook, a directory, or a Scout manual--is a third study skill. Children need these location skills for preparing reports in school as well as for their out-of-school activities, and they need help in doing so more efficiently. A child who is preparing a report on cars, for example, needs to know that the information in the encyclopedia may be under "cars," "motor cars," "automobiles," or "transportation." Skill in thinking of topics to look under in the index can be improved with practice. Then once the article is found, skimming is used to find the pertinent parts, which in turn must be read, summarized and organized.

At no other period in a child's school career is such emphasis placed on study skills, and the middle-grade teacher must accept the responsibility for helping children develop good study habits. Finding the main idea, skimming, locating information, synthesizing and organizing--all need to be understood and used.¹

Reading for recreation is an aspect of reading which should not be ignored by the teacher. Most of the youngsters in the intermediate grades have learned to read for pleasure--these youngsters should receive guidance to continue developing this ability and to prevent their reading from becoming centered strictly on adventure stories, animal stories, or some other particular type of story. Enjoyment as well as knowledge and good social characteristics can be developed through reading biographies, historical accounts and other informational books.

The youngsters who have not learned to read for fun should not be overlooked. Their particular interests need to be considered and books containing stories which are high in their interest levels but written on their reading level should be suggested. This is probably the most effective means of

¹Helen Huus, "The Nature and Scope of Reading Programs Adapted To Today's Needs in the Intermediate Grades," Better Readers For Our Times, William S. Gray and Nancy Larrick, editors. (International Reading Association Conference Proceedings, Volume 1. New York: Scholastic Magazines, 1956), pp. 25 - 26.

getting the youngsters started on recreational reading.

Flexible Grouping To Provide For A Flexible Program

Probably the most widely used technique in operating a flexible program is that of grouping students with others of like abilities. This may be carried further to include grouping in areas of like interests or groups which are deficient in particular reading skills. Flexibility in grouping must be allowed for if grouping is to accomplish its intended purpose. Harris proposes two methods which can be used to attain this flexibility:

1. Changing Group Placements. Children should be moved from one group to another whenever it becomes evident that their reading needs can be better met in the new group. . . . In making such decisions, it is often desirable to consult the child and respect the child's desires concerning his group placement.

2. Using Different Groupings Simultaneously. At least two different forms of grouping should be in operation. In classes with a wide range of ability, grouping for developmental reading should be according to reading level, with some use of specific needs grouping as special needs become apparent. Grouping for functional reading can often be in heterogeneous groups, especially if a project or activity unit plan is followed. Recreational and functional reading both provide opportunities for setting up interest groupings. When children belong now to one group and now to another, the possibility of developing a rigid caste system in which the poorest readers become "untouchables" is held to a minimum.¹

Flexibility should be maintained in grouping strictly for the purpose of allowing the pupil to work with the group which is most appropriate for him and should not be allowed to take place just for the fun of changing or the result is likely to be one of complete confusion.

While grouping is the most widely used practice to provide for differences in ability at the present time, Fay² states that the most widely discussed trend is individualized reading. Fay describes this approach with the following

¹Albert J. Harris, How To Increase Reading Ability (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1961), p. 128.

²Leo Fay, "Trends in the Teaching of Elementary Reading," Phi Delta Kappan, 41:8 (May 1960), p. 346.

characteristics:

Elimination of the basal reader as the core of reading instruction, self-selection of materials by the pupils for their own instruction, and individual conferences between the pupil and the teacher. This approach capitalizes on pupil interest and, theoretically at least, makes complete individualization possible. Both teachers and children tend to react quite enthusiastically to this approach, and this alone is a strong recommendation. The approach has its weaknesses, however. The very real values of group learning may be lost in a completely individualized program. It also tends to be very demanding of the teacher's time. As a result, the children and their needs can become lost as the teacher frantically goes about her record keeping. Furthermore, with lack of organization some skills may be partially or even totally ignored.¹

Due to its inherent weaknesses, individualized reading is not likely to become the one and only method of teaching reading, but it is likely to be adopted, in varying degrees, in many of the reading programs of the near future. With the proper application, this phase of reading can aid the teacher not only in caring for individual needs but also in stimulating the children's interests in reading and school as well.

Stimulating Classroom Setting

A stimulating classroom setting in which attitudes, interests, and abilities may be effectively developed must be supplied by the teacher. It is to be hoped that the physical plant will be sound, adequate, and properly decorated and lighted but the most important item in developing student morale is a genuine interest in the students and their learning activities on the part of the teacher. It is this writer's opinion that the characteristics which Harris set forth for a remedial teacher could well be extended to include all teachers:

The most important single characteristic of a good remedial teacher is a real liking for children. The liking must be genuine--children quickly

¹Ibid., pp. 346 - 347.

detect the difference between a warm, friendly person and one who puts on a show of friendliness without really feeling that way. . . .

A good remedial teacher has a manner which conveys a note of optimism and good cheer to the children. He may be full of contagious enthusiasm, or he may be a quiet person who creates a calm, relaxed atmosphere. . . .

A good remedial teacher is also sensitive to the emotional needs of the children. He tries to provide a setting in which children can feel that they are appreciated and that their ideas and feelings are respected.¹

While a genuine interest in children is unquestionably the most important aspect in providing a stimulating classroom setting, other factors of importance include good grooming and appearance on the part of the teacher. A reserved sense of humor through which the teacher displays the ability to laugh at humorous happenings and yet retains the wisdom and authority to discourage nonsensical stories or jokes that would cause unjustified loss of time and eventually lead to loss of discipline and the breakdown of the learning process is important. Attractive displays, bulletin boards, and extrinsic motivations such as charts showing the number of books read may be used. As Heilman says: "This extrinsic motivation is educationally justifiable, but teachers must remember its limitation. It can work for only a limited time."²

Another method of providing a stimulating setting that will stir the motivation to read is to surround the youngsters with plentiful and interesting reading materials.

Plentiful and Varied Reading Materials

Some school systems may want to use basal texts only and allow for individual differences by using different texts for different groups. Other schools

¹Albert J. Harris, How To Increase Reading Ability (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1961), p. 200.

²Arthur W. Heilman, Principles and Practices of Teaching Reading (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1961), p. 115.

may wish to use materials which are specifically designed to allow for individual differences. No matter which plan is followed, if the developmental program is to accomplish its intended purpose there must be material which is interesting to and readable by the poorest readers in the room as well as material which challenges the best readers. As Strang says: "The interest and comprehensibility of the available reading materials determine whether a person's reading experience is rewarding or disappointing, stimulating or boring, satisfying or frustrating."¹

Boys and girls in the intermediate grades usually have a high level of interest for animal adventure stories but the teacher should employ every possible means which she can in determining the interests of her present group and then select materials based on these interests and the abilities of the pupils. Gates suggests the following points be kept in mind when selecting material for a developmental reading program:

1. The material should be highly interesting to the pupil.
2. The material should be of proper difficulty.
3. The material should be of various types.
4. An abundance of easy reading should be provided as a substitute for review.²

The preceding paragraphs have been concerned primarily with the interest factor in selecting materials for the reading program. The teacher is also greatly concerned with the specific materials which should be included. Harris says these materials should be included in a rich, well rounded reading program:

¹Ruth Strang, "Providing Reading Materials Appropriate to Interest and Maturity Levels," Better Readers For Our Times, William S. Gray and Nancy Larrick, editors. (International Reading Association Conference Proceedings, Volume 1. New York: Scholastic Magazines, 1956), p. 82.

²Arthur I. Gates, The Improvement of Reading (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928), pp. 26 - 29.

1. Several sets of basal readers.
2. Workbooks which accompany the readers.
3. Reading games and puzzles.
4. A classroom library of at least fifty books, covering a wide range in difficulty and interest appeal, and changed several times during the year.
5. Reference works. . . . Above the primary grades there should be an encyclopedia, dictionaries, atlases, an almanac, and the like.
6. Special teacher-devised materials.
7. Children's magazines and picture magazines.
8. Workbooks not correlated with specific readers.
9. Related pictures, filmstrips, slides, recordings, and movies to help provide ideational background.¹

The need for other materials may be suggested through an evaluation of the reading program.

Continuous Measurement and Evaluation of the Program

No reading program has ever been perfect and probably never will be, therefore there is constant need for evaluation and revision. Naturally the program should not be revised for the sake of revision itself, changes should be made only when it is felt the changes will more nearly attain the objectives of the program.

The prime objective of the program is to produce more capable readers, therefore the prime criteria for evaluation of the program is the collective evaluation of each of the students. Through this collective evaluation it can be determined in which areas the instructional program is weakest and then

¹Albert J. Harris, How To Increase Reading Ability (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1961), p. 129.

methods of instruction in these areas can be revised. Hester states:

The information obtained by a teacher through the use of various evaluative procedures may be used in two ways. First it is used to help the teacher guide the individual child in his growth. . . . A second use of the information is to enable the teacher and faculty to view the strengths and weaknesses of the reading program as a whole. When the data are collected and interpreted, real evidence of the extent to which the school program is reaching the desired goals in reading growth is made available. The next step in planning may be undertaken effectively by the staff. The necessary changes in pupil growth are not brought about by haphazard instruction but require definite planning if the goals are to be attained. Knowledge of what changes have been made in the pupils and what remains to be done in the future is essential. Only by appraisal and evaluation is it possible to know the effectiveness of the methods and materials that are being used.¹

Another method for evaluating the reading program is to use the principles of a developmental program as the criteria for evaluation. This evaluation, as well as any other methods of program evaluation, can probably be conducted best in a faculty meeting. The inherent strengths and weaknesses of the program are much more likely to be brought out in a setting of this type than if each teacher were to do the evaluation individually.

Any changes which are suggested should be viewed rather critically to see whether they can meet the following three qualifications which are listed in order of their importance: (1) will the change produce better reading students, (2) is the change in accordance with the principles of a developmental reading program, (3) can the change be effectively carried out by the teachers without resultant loss in another phase of their teaching?

Identification of Student Reading Deficiencies

A very important principle of developmental reading is that of continual evaluation of student progress and provision for his individual needs. Regarding

¹Kathleen B. Hester, Teaching Every Child to Read. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1955), p. 392.

evaluation, Gray and Reese illustrate the process with these six points:

1. Each teacher determines the initial status of her pupils' progress in reading by means of a standardized diagnostic test, thus disclosing needs, as well as attainments.
2. She sets up objectives of achievement in keeping with the revealed needs of pupils.
3. She selects the materials and methods of instruction suitable to the realization of desirable goals.
4. After a period of instruction and guidance, she makes another appraisal to determine the amount of progress toward the realization of these goals. (She may employ another form of each standardized reading test initially used.)
5. She interprets the results of the reappraisal and makes inferences regarding both the attained and unattained objectives. (Steps 3, 4, and 5 are repeated as often as necessary to attain any desired degree of achievement.)
6. She reaches conclusions concerning needed changes in future instruction, choice of materials, grouping of pupils and develops appropriate plans.¹

Gray and Reese have described a very good testing program, but as an evaluation program it appears they have missed some very important points, most of them subjective as they involve teacher opinions. Harris shows his agreement with this when he says:

The evaluation of reading involves considerably more than the collection of scores on reading tests. Evaluation means arriving at judgements about the degree to which the objectives of the reading program are being achieved. Evaluation can make use of data from many sources: standardized test scores, observation of pupil performances during reading lessons, workbook exercises, evidence of reading interests derived from discussion periods or written compositions, reports on independent reading, success in using subject-matter textbooks, and so on. The data used in evaluation do not have to be quantitatively exact. The important thing is to have some usable evidence concerning the degree to which each important objective is being reached.²

¹Lillian Gray and Dora Reese, Teaching Children to Read (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1957), pp. 445 - 446.

²Albert J. Harris, How To Increase Reading Ability (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 152 - 153.

When the teacher evaluates the reading student she should compare his grade placement with his score on an intelligence quotient test to determine whether he is working up to his capability. According to Dolch:

Very often a child who is reading a year or two behind the rest of his class will be found to have a mental age that is a year or two behind theirs. He may thus be reading up to his real ability and not actually be retarded at all.¹

The student's intelligence quotient should be determined by an oral or at least largely oral test. A written intelligence quotient test will measure well the intelligence quotient for a person who is a good reader but is more likely to indicate the reading ability of a poor reader than his actual intelligence quotient.

Even though a youngster is found to be reading up to the level of his intelligence quotient, developmental tactics should still be used but the teacher need not feel such a youngster is underachieving.

The processes involved in evaluating the reading students bear out the need for highly trained, capable teachers who take a genuine interest in their pupils attainments, needs, interests and abilities.

Common Needs, Interests, and Abilities of Children

While one of the main objectives of a developmental reading program is to provide individualized instruction to meet the challenge presented by individual differences, the common interests should not be neglected. Among the common needs of children we find the desire to belong to or be associated with a group and the desire to attain a degree of success within that group.

¹Edward William Dolch, A Manual For Remedial Reading (Champaign: The Garrard Press, 1945), p. 396.

Both these needs, as well as common interests and abilities can be cared for through the means of flexible grouping. Harris says:

Children may be brought together by the teacher on the basis of a common need for help or may spontaneously form a group on the basis of a common interest. Groups are very temporary and are disbanded as soon as the specific purpose is accomplished.¹

Another common need of children is that of being cared for and loved by an adult. In most instances this need is adequately filled by the child's parents but in some cases the child may feel he is wholly unwanted in the adult world. Here again, a genuinely interested and understanding teacher will help to fill the void. The type of teacher desired is not one who teaches the subject of reading, but rather one who teaches children and regards reading as a process which they must understand and be able to use.

Reading Viewed as a Process

By regarding reading as a process rather than as a subject, it is easily seen that children should be taught reading on all levels and in all subject areas by all teachers. Since there is very little departmentalization at the intermediate grade level in schooling, this concept has been rather widely accepted by this group of teachers. It is the extent or depth to which it is practiced by the individual teachers which needs to be expanded, for as has been stated before, the basic skills and fundamentals of reading are far too often neglected at this level because of the assumption that they were taught to the youngsters at the primary level and need not be taught again. The skills and techniques dealing with such things as word recognition or identification

¹Albert J. Harris, How To Increase Reading Ability (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1961), p. 117.

and comprehension of the printed matter are to be used in all academic subjects, not just in the formal reading class alone. It is highly important that these basics of learning be repeated again and again, though from different approaches, till the youngsters can apply and use them independently and with confidence.

DeBoer and Dallmann expressed this clearly when they stated:

The teaching of reading should not be confined to a single period in the school day. The special problems of reading in arithmetic, history, geography, science, and other subjects should be dealt with at the same time these subjects are studied. The special vocabularies of the various fields of study require careful, patient instruction. Not only the new words, but familiar words that have new meanings for the pupil require particular attention.¹

When reading is regarded as a process involving all academic subjects rather than the reading class alone, it is easy to see that the youngsters must be taught to read for different purposes and at different rates of speed.

Reading According to the Purpose and Difficulty of the Material

A new concept for the student in the intermediate grades is that of adjusting his reading rate and techniques to fit the purposes and difficulty of the material which is being read. Prior to this level of instruction the reading has been almost wholly restricted to learning how to read non-informative material and reading for pleasure in order to strengthen the ability to read.

In the intermediate grades the serious study of content subjects is begun. This requires the student, while reading, to think deeply enough to comprehend and remember facts, concepts, and information which he did not know previously. The preceding statements are in accord with Heilman² who also

¹John J. DeBoer and Martha Dallmann, The Teaching of Reading (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1960), p. 332.

²Arthur W. Heilman, Principles and Practices of Teaching Reading (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1961), p. 284.

indicates that teachers should help the students develop the habit of reading all material as rapidly as possible with full comprehension of what they have read. Harris¹ believes that training to and including grade five should emphasize comprehension only, with speed emphasis being introduced in grade six.

Harris² listed two methods for increasing reading speed. These he referred to as controlled reading and motivated, timed reading. Controlled reading makes use of machines such as tachistoscopes, controlled readers and other machines which are designed to force the student to read words and word phrases with great rapidity on the theory that this increased speed will become habit and carry over into actual reading. Many educators have expressed doubt at the wisdom of using machines to teach reading. Harris expresses this opinion:

These methods try to compel the reader to move his eyes in a set pattern and to fixate each word or phrase for a predetermined time interval. They make it impossible for the reader to slow down when he meets with difficulty or to reread. For that reason they are regarded with some suspicion by those who, like this writer, regard eye movements as symptoms rather than as causes of poor reading.³

Motivated reading is based on the opinion that the causes of slow reading are lack of enough practice on easy, interesting material and lack of motivation to improve speed. Harris⁴ lists the three major components of a motivated reading program as being: (1) overcoming specific interfering habits, (2) motivating the reader to do a large amount of easy reading, and (3) timed silent reading exercises with checks on comprehension.

¹Albert J. Harris, How To Increase Reading Ability (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 537 - 538.

²Ibid., pp. 525 - 538.

³Ibid., p. 528.

⁴Ibid., p. 530.

Unless further research with reading machines establishes their definite value, it appears the developmental program should depend largely on motivated reading to increase reading speed, with machines playing only a minor part or possibly no part at all. The important point is that all students be motivated to read with speed and comprehension and to improve this till they have reached their maximum capacity.

Continual Progression at the Individual's Success Rate to Maximum Capacity

The fact that pupils do not advance before they have mastered the needed skills for advancement and yet are allowed to advance immediately when these skills have been mastered is one of the most significant principles of the developmental reading program. Smith and Dechant express this clearly when they say:

The developmental program focuses on individual needs and individual differences. Reading experiences and pupil progress are not dictated by a calendar. Grade-limits disappear and mass instruction in reading is replaced by an emphasis on pupil needs. It begins at each learner's current level and attempts to lead him at his own success rate to his maximum achievement.¹

Constant student diagnosis by the teacher and regular testing must be used to determine the child's current reading ability. After the needs and abilities of the child have been determined the teacher should use the media of flexible grouping and individualized instruction to develop the child at his own success rate to his maximum capacity.

Developing Reading Maturity and Instilling the Desire to Read for Information as well as recreation

The final objective of a developmental reading program is developing

¹Henry P. Smith and Emerald V. Dechant, Psychology In Teaching Reading (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), pp. 378 - 379.

reading maturity in the reading student. The degree of success achieved in developing mature readers will be dependent on the degree of success which has been attained in developing the ability to read in the students. As Bond and Wagner say, "Anything that is done to improve the reading ability of children will tend to increase their interests and improve their tastes."¹

While they feel that improving the ability to read will also increase the interests and improve the tastes of the youngsters, Bond and Wagner feel the teacher should play an active role in guiding the development of interests and improvement of tastes. They state:

The ways of developing interests and improving tastes are very many indeed. They seem, however, to focus around four major headings: (1) wide reading, stimulated and guided by means of many activities; (2) a recognition that reading interests are not achieved overnight, but are developmental in nature and that any interests therefore must grow out of previous interests; (3) the ability to read has a marked influence upon interest, and therefore materials must be appropriate to the child's reading level; (4) the materials used for developing reading interests should come from all of the subject-matter areas of the elementary-school grades if well-rounded reading interests for factual as well as fictional materials are developed.

There are many ways of stimulating wide reading. When the child encounters in his reading program an excerpt from a larger story or an incident or a story from a collection of stories, he should be referred to the book from which the excerpt has come. If his interest has been sufficiently aroused by the excerpt, it will be rather natural for him to follow up the introduction to the book and read the story or other material particularly when time is allotted for personal-development reading. In the purchase of material it is wise to include the books from which excerpts have been taken. It will be recognized that the basal reading program is usually designed to introduce the reading of children's literature, science material, biography, and the like, in order that those materials should encourage a wide reading in the many fields. At the same time the teacher can recommend other books by the same author, or upon the same topic, that she knows to be available.²

¹Guy L. Bond and Eva Bond Wagner, Teaching the Child to Read (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 392.

²Ibid., pp. 384 - 385.

It is the teacher's responsibility to guide the development of interests and improvement of tastes but she must also be careful that her suggestions are not made in such a manner that the students feel they are requirements rather than suggestions. Forcing students to read or prohibiting them from reading particular types of literature is likely to cause the students to react against the teacher's requirements and result adversely to the desired objectives. Harris cautions against this practice when he says:

One of the main objectives of a well-rounded reading program should be to develop a love for reading that will last beyond school days. Improvement of taste and literary standards is also important, but we have learned that this cannot be forced. Prohibiting of "trash" only makes it seem more desirable. Children who are encouraged to read freely in a wide variety of books usually show improved taste and discrimination as they grow older.¹

Thus it may be seen that the main role of the teacher in developing reading maturity in youngsters is to teach them how to read well enough so that they possess the ability to read at their maximum potential. The mature readers should have mastered the art of reading to the point where they derive enjoyment through reading for information strictly for the sake of knowledge itself, as well as enjoyment from reading for recreation.

¹Albert J. Harris, "Three Kinds of Reading," NEA Journal, 52:1 (January 1963), p. 42.

SUMMARY

The actual formulation of a developmental reading program should be a cooperative effort involving the administrator, teachers, and lay members from the community. The formulation of the program can probably be best accomplished by adopting a basal reader and building a reading skills program around it.

Reference should be made to the principles of a developmental program during this formulation. The most important points which vary from the typical reading program of today are: (1) continual evaluation of the students to determine their needs and abilities, (2) provision for reading skills to be taught in all subjects and at all levels whenever the need arises, and (3) flexible grouping and enough individualized instruction to allow any student to advance at his own success rate to his maximum capacity.

The developmental reading program is a revision of the existing reading programs of today. In this revision all the good points are kept and other desirable objectives added. This program may mean more work for the teacher but certainly she should be well-rewarded by producing many more capable reading students.

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A STUDY OF SELECTED PRINCIPLES OF A DEVELOPMENTAL
READING PROGRAM FOR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by

WAYNE A. WRAY

B. A., Kansas State University, 1959

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

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The purpose of this report was to present the principles of a developmental reading program and suggest methods by which these principles could be formulated into an effective developmental reading program which could be instituted in any elementary school.

The documentary method of research was used in writing the report. Research brought out the wisdom of establishing the need for a developmental reading program and formulating the program through the cooperative efforts of the administrator, teachers, and lay members from the community.

The report was devoted to listing the generally accepted principles of a developmental reading program and evolving each into a portion of the total program which could be instituted in an elementary school. These principles in condensed version are: The developmental program must: (1) be an all-school program directed toward carefully identified goals, (2) be concerned with the personal and social development of each student, (3) co-ordinate reading with the pupil's other communicative experiences, (4) be a continuous program extending throughout the school system, (5) be a flexible program that is adjusted to variations in student characteristics, abilities and reading needs, (6) have a stimulating classroom setting, (7) provide plentiful varied reading materials, (8) provide for continuous measurement and evaluation of the program, (9) provide for continuous identification of student deficiencies and difficulties and provide for individual needs, (10) provide for common needs, interests, and abilities of children, (11) regard reading as a process, (12) emphasize reading for understanding, (13) allow each student to progress at his own success rate to maximum capacity, and (14) seek to develop reading maturity.

It was found that a developmental reading program is not in opposition to the basal reader programs which most elementary schools are using today. The basal reader program may be retained and an enriched reading program built around it. This program would be a continuous one, extending throughout the entire school system and all teachers would be actively involved in the teaching of reading. The enriched program would provide special emphasis in the building of reading skills and making allowances for individual differences. This program would afford each child the opportunity to develop to his maximum reading potential.